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ABSTRACT

The longing for a sense of "community" has become a major theme in recent writings about educational and social issues. An analysis of the potential for creating viable and meaningful community in schools is the focus of this book. Using sociological theory and social analysis, it examines how schools achieve community and explores how the establishment of community in schools is possible. The political and economic realities of educating youth today require community-builders to adopt a new realism that recognizes some of the conditions of modern life. The dangers, such as increased layers of bureaucracy and a less personal environment, are discussed, as well as the unanticipated effects of efforts to establish more meaningful communities, the urge to pay special heed to "systemic reform," and the many unintended and frustrating consequences these movements can create. The increasing confusion over the role of schools and how this confusion muddies the educational mission is examined at length. Chapters include: (1) "The Dilemma of Community"; (2) "Theory of Community: 'Gemeinschaft' and 'Gesellschaft'"; (3) "Modern Notions of Community"; (4) "Drifting Toward 'Gesellschaft': The Schools' Identity Crisis"; (5) "The Promise of Reform: Rebuilding School Community Connections"; (6) "The Promise of Reform: School as Community"; and (7) "Paradox and Promises". (Contains an index and around 150 references.) (RJM)

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